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Evaluation

Management response to the evaluation of UNDP assistance to conflict-affected countries

Context, background and rationale

1. Assistance to conflict-affected countries accounted for nearly 40 per cent of UNDP global expenditure in 2005. The evaluation was commissioned by the Evaluation Office of UNDP in response to a request from the Executive Board.

2. The evaluation assessed the extent to which UNDP performance has contributed to improving human security and addressing the structural conditions conducive to conflict so that a recurrence of armed conflict could be prevented.

3. The evaluation concluded that UNDP is an essential component of the international effort and is uniquely positioned within the United Nations system to address the structural conditions that lead to conflict. UNDP has played a pioneering role in developing strategic responses to conflict and has introduced many innovative projects, especially community-based ones. The evaluation identified a number of challenges for UNDP and made recommendations for responding to them.

4. The evaluation report presented the following key recommendations for improving the overall quality of UNDP assistance to conflict-affected countries:

(1) Formulate a strategic vision based upon the concept of human security;

(2) Integrate development concerns within United Nations strategies for security;

(3) Build substantive capacity in core areas of peacebuilding;

(4) Improve the effectiveness of implementation; and

(5) Enhance coordination and partnership.

5. While UNDP management has some reservations about recommendations 1 and 2, it broadly agrees with recommendations 3-5. In the annex that follows,

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UNDP management proposes key action points and a time frame for each of the recommendations.

6. The annex table follows the standard format for the presentation of a management response to an independent evaluation. First, the recommendation is quoted verbatim from the text of the independent evaluation. It is followed by the UNDP management response and proposed follow-up to the recommendation of the independent evaluation.

Annex

Key recommendations and management response

Evaluation issue and recommendation 1

Formulate a strategic vision based on the concept of human security. In order to strengthen its intellectual leadership, UNDP, in conjunction with other United Nations organizations, especially the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), needs to elaborate a strategic vision based on the concept of human security. This concept provides an umbrella under which the structural conditions leading to conflict may be addressed.

Management response

UNDP wishes to respond to this recommendation in two parts: (a) on the recommendation to formulate a strategic vision; and (b) that the strategic vision be based on the concept of human security.

On (a), UNDP supports the recommendation to formulate a strategic vision of UNDP assistance to conflict-affected countries. UNDP suggests that the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery lead the development of such a strategic vision as an integral part of its contribution to the UNDP strategic plan, 2008-2011. UNDP will work closely with the whole range of United Nations partners, including DPA, as the system as a whole clarifies and strengthens its approach to conflict-affected countries.

On (b), UNDP notes that the concept of human security continues to lend itself to a range of interpretations and, therefore, does not support the recommendation to use it as the conceptual basis for the UNDP strategic vision.

Key management actions	Time frame	Responsible unit
1.1 Develop a strategic vision on assistance to crisis-affected countries across UNDP	Initiated 1st quarter 2007	BCPR lead Regional bureaux OSG BRSP
1.2 Develop a strategic vision on assistance to crisis-affected countries within the United Nations system	Work on developing a strategic vision for the United Nations in crisis-affected countries is under way in the context of different inter-organizational processes. *Estimated time start:* Under way	Secretary-General's Policy Committee; various inter-organization task forces; DPA; Division for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO); UNDP; Development Group Office (DGO); Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) and Peacebuilding Commission (PBC); United Nations country team (UNCT), led by the resident coordinator

Evaluation issue and recommendation 2

Integrate development concerns within United Nations strategies for security. Development is critical in addressing the structural conditions conducive to conflict. UNDP needs to increase its presence in the Security Council to impress upon these institutions the paramount importance of development concerns. To do so:

(a) The Administrator should brief the Security Council as does the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the High Commissioner for Refugees.

(b) Development assistance should be included in assessed contributions for missions with a Security Council mandate.

(c) UNDP should be involved in the negotiation of peace agreements and should press for the involvement of civil society and women's groups.

(d) Development concerns should have a stronger voice in integrated offices. UNCTs should be better integrated into the United Nations mission, and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General responsible for

development and humanitarian affairs should be assigned additional support staff. The political/military actors have to incorporate the thinking of development/humanitarian actors, and the latter, in turn, have to be ready to work more closely with the former.

(e) Development concerns should receive priority in the new PBC.

Management response

UNDP agrees that additional actions are necessary to ensure that development concerns occupy the attention of the political and peacekeeping/security communities to ensure, inter alia, that development needs receive sufficient and early funding to address the structural conditions that underlie conflict.

UNDP notes that the recommendations concerning the United Nations Security Council and assessed contributions are not within the mandate of UNDP to decide.

UNDP agrees that development concerns should have a stronger voice in integrated missions (and integrated offices). UNDP believes that if the revised integrated mission planning process (endorsed by the Secretary-General in mid-2006) is fully implemented according to the principles and procedures agreed at the inter-agency level, it could provide a more effective foundation for ensuring integrated thinking and action among United Nations political, peacekeeping, development and humanitarian actors.

With regard to the negotiation of peace agreements, UNDP will continue to focus on its core development mandate. UNDP stands ready to respond to national requests for support in areas related to its mandate.

UNDP agrees that development concerns should receive priority in the new Peacebuilding Commission.

Key management actions	Timeframe	Responsible unit
2.1 Continue to reach out to political and peacekeeping communities to increase awareness of development considerations	Ongoing	BCPR
2.2 Continue deepening inter-organization collaboration in the context of integrated missions and integrated offices	Initiated in 2006	DGO; BCPR (with DPKO and DPA)
2.3 Engage in outreach and dialogue with PBSO and PBC	Initiated in 2006	Executive Office; BCPR and UNCTs in countries on the PBC docket

Evaluation issue and recommendation 3

Build substantive capacity in core areas of peacebuilding. UNDP tends to undertake gap-filling and administrative functions in many countries. Gap-filling and administrative functions can never be other than short-term. Rather than carrying out these activities in an ad hoc fashion, UNDP needs to develop a substantive capacity in core areas that build on innovation and best practices in UNDP programmes that can be replicated in different situations.

The mandate of UNDP in governance, reintegration of war-affected populations and the development aspects of arms control and mine clearance all place it potentially at the very centre of a concerted peacebuilding programme. More specifically, within the framework of a strategic vision UNDP needs to further develop policies and approaches in the following core areas:

(a) *Recovery and reintegration of war-affected populations,* including disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and mine action; long-term political reconciliation that extends political agreements reached at the centre to the local level, including the equivalent of truth commissions and/or war crimes tribunals;

(b) *Governance and capacity-building,* including strengthening parliamentary institutions with a particular view to broadening participation and inclusion in decision-making; decentralization, with a view to empowering local communities; strengthening the role of key civil society institutions – not just in the delivery of services, but also as sources of knowledge, watchdogs and independent organizations for advocacy; public sector reform; accountability and anti-corruption programmes;

(c) *Justice and security sector reform,* including: independence of the judiciary; access to justice; key institutions for guaranteeing human rights; and restructuring of the civilian police and the military;
(d) *Poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods,* especially community-based development with a view to local empowerment and the creation of employment and sustainable livelihoods through people-centred, area-based programmes and small credit programmes; the development of policies that foster the growth of small enterprises and sustainable livelihoods.

Management response

Efforts are under way to develop further substantive capacity in core areas and to increase the collection and dissemination of best practices. UNDP agrees on the need to continue to develop clear policies and approaches in the core areas identified in the UNDP strategic plan and strategic vision for assistance in crisis-affected countries.

Key management actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit**
3.1 The new strategy should focus on deepening substantive capacity in core areas and emphasize policy work and compilation of lessons learned. The post-conflict economic recovery report under way is an example of the type of applied research that BCPR will be undertaking.	2007-2011	BCPR
3.2 Efforts to develop clear policies and approaches in selected areas already under way in the context of joint work between BCPR and BDP on justice and security-sector reform, capacity-building, and the Millennium Development Goals in conflict-affected countries.	Under way	BCPR; BDP
3.3 The Secretary-General's Policy Committee has tasked the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNDP/BCPR to consult jointly with an inter-organization working group to draft a United Nations system-wide policy paper on post-conflict employment creation, income generation and reintegration. This will assist in further clarifying UNDP policies in those areas.	First six months of 2007	BCPR; ILO
3.4 Make progress on mainstreaming gender concerns more broadly into UNDP assistance to crisis-affected countries as outlined in the eight-point agenda endorsed by the UNDP Gender Committee.	Initiated in 1st quarter 2007	UNDP country offices, regional bureaux, with BCPR, and the gender team in BDP in a supportive role

Evaluation issue and recommendation 4

Improve the effectiveness of implementation. One of the recognized strengths of UNDP is that some of its procedures are more flexible than those of other actors in the United Nations system, and it is therefore better able to innovate in response to crises. That edge should be maintained, and to increase operational flexibility, intellectual responsiveness, and speed of delivery, UNDP should:

(a) *Develop the analytical capacity to understand specific conflicts and monitor human security.* UNDP needs to build capacity among 'think-tanks' and academic institutions in conflict-affected countries so as to have a long-term analysis of the conflict and to collect data on human security. Such data are very sparse at present, as became evident in undertaking the present evaluation.

(b) *Enhance human resources in conflict-affected countries.* This should include the development of a clear and effective set of incentives to attract experienced staff to serve in conflict-affected countries; training programmes in all facets of human security designed to facilitate adaptation to new activities for national and international staff in countries affected by conflict or in fragile states, which would emphasize a 'service' rather that control orientation; workshops, seminars and other forms of debate about human security policies and specific contexts should be conducted both at headquarters and in country offices.

(c) *Undertake a systematic review of the financial and administrative procedures* of the organization.

(d) *Emphasize full transparency*, particularly by ensuring the regular updating of its national websites and by posting more systematically user-friendly information on projects, budgets, procurement and recruitment.

(e) *Improve outreach beyond capitals*, including through the establishment of field offices with the necessary delegation of authority.

Management response

UNDP agrees that in crisis-affected countries attention needs to be given to enhancing human resources, reviewing financial and administrative procedures, and increasing transparency of operational functions. BCPR, working with BOM and partners across UNDP, has launched a 'surge capacity' initiative to addresses those issues. This should contribute substantially to increased flexibility in crisis prevention and recovery contexts.

In terms of developing analytical capacity to work with requesting countries to understand conflicts, BCPR has developed a tool for such a purpose – the conflict development analysis (CDA). The CDA was developed as an analytical aid for countries to use for both strategic analysis and programme and policy design/review in conflict-affected countries. UNDP recognizes that application of the tool requires training and sensitization – a challenge that needs to be continuously addressed.

In principle, management agrees that UNDP needs to expand its presence outside of the capitals in conflict-affected countries and has initiated this policy in countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nepal and Uganda

Key management actions	Time frame	Responsible unit
4.1 Continue implementation of UNDP 'surge' initiatives	Development initiated in 2006; implementation under way.	BCPR; BOM
4.2 Continue mainstreaming of CDA tool through regional bureau workshops, country-specific training and development of training modules	Ongoing	BCPR; Regional bureaux; UNDP country offices.
4.3 Establish additional sub-offices in crisis-affected countries		Regional bureaux; selected country offices

Evaluation issue and recommendation 5

Enhance coordination and partnerships. Coordination mechanisms should be streamlined and reduced in overall number, favouring coordination around substantive, clear-cut, general strategic frameworks for addressing the structural causes of conflict rather than the management of funds. Subsidiary teams could be established in order to address issues that can contribute to conflict, such as macroeconomic policy and revenue and budget management, the rule of law and access to justice, public administration and civil service reform, gender and the role of women, the construction of essential infrastructure and others.

UNDP also needs to further develop certain key, strategic partnerships. It has already begun to develop its partnership with DPA and DPKO, as witnessed in the establishment of the Executive Committee for Peace and Security and the integrated offices. Three other key partnerships that would benefit greatly from improvement are with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), regional development banks, and civil society.

(a) *The World Bank and the IMF.* UNDP and the World Bank currently collaborate closely in conflict-affected countries on joint needs assessments, in the management of country-specific trust funds and in the preparation of country-specific pledging conferences. Yet there is considerable room for more substantive collaboration that would benefit both organizations, especially in dealing with the crucial problem of youth unemployment. The judicious use of World Bank-International Development Association credits or grants, combined with the more people-oriented perspective of UNDP, as well as management and technical skills – including those drawn from other organizations of the United Nations system – would provide a strong basis for a partnership that could yield important results in terms of human security. To raise the impact of these schemes requires not only project-based support, but also incisive policy reforms. Neither can be effectively scaled up without the reform of macroeconomic policies and improvement of the overall environment for private sector growth and employment creation. UNDP needs to press the financial institutions to include social justice

and employment as key priorities, and should partner with the World Bank and the IMF to influence government and even interim-government policies on a range of issues – from tariff and non-tariff barriers, rules and regulations that affect the growth of private enterprise to fiscal and monetary policies that encourage small enterprises.

(b) *Regional development banks.* Post-conflict reconstruction requires extensive investment in essential infrastructure: from primary to tertiary feeder roads; from power plants to irrigation schemes; and from housing to educational and health facilities. Area-based development with community participation can effectively serve as a planning and capacity-building mechanism for the management of financing and even grant funds from regional development banks where capacity is otherwise perceived to be low and guarantees of the reliable use of funds are required.

(c) *Civil society.* UNDP needs to give much greater priority to civil society groups, both as partners and as guides in the formulation of strategy. There is still a tendency to prioritize relations with those in power. Yet civil society groups who are not interested in power often have more concern for the public as opposed to private and sectarian interests. Civil society groups need to be regarded as a resource, a repository of local knowledge and a strategic partner rather than as a beneficiary or an implementing agent. In this respect, women's groups are particularly important since they are the least likely to be pursuing political or sectarian goals. For lasting peace it is essential that civil society institutions be encouraged in a manner that ensures public and community oversight over: essential government functions and expenditure; the management of key institutions, including the courts, the police and the military; the safeguarding of human rights; conflict resolution; and the preservation of minority rights – to name just a few areas of concern. In the past, UNDP, like other institutions, has fostered civil society organizations (CSOs) largely through subcontracts, direct support and capacity-building. That said, civil society tends to be treated as a monolithic entity, without sufficient understanding of its diversity, its strengths and its weaknesses. It is recommended that a new approach be adopted based on mutual respect and realism. Civil society institutions should be invited for regular consultations. UNDP and other United Nations organizations can provide an essential bridge and legitimizing support for institutions that in the past have often been targeted and marginalized. It is understood that CSOs, too, are subject to vested interests and their own biases. Consultations with civil society groups, as with other organizations, need to be undertaken with a degree of hard-nosed realism. Yet failure to consult in this manner is likely to lead to failure to prevent the recurrence of conflict. Such consultations facilitate better public understanding of the objectives and approach adopted by the United Nations and the UNCT, which is frequently subject to misinterpretation and consequent suspicion.

Management response

UNDP, through the resident coordinator system, has been pivotal in trying to enhance coordination and partnerships in conflict-affected countries. Many initiatives are under way, both at headquarters and at the country level, to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones. Particular progress has been made in the last few years in deepening our collaboration with DPA, DPKO, the Bretton Woods Institutions and civil society. UNDP also has made inroads with the regional development banks.

Key management actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit**
5.1 Continue engagement with DPKO on the integrated mission planning process and integrated offices, through the headquarters working group and, at the country level, in the context of existing peacekeeping missions (such as those in Burundi and Haiti)	Ongoing	DGO; BCPR
5.2 Continue dialogue and cooperation with the Bretton Woods Institutions through such initiatives as the state-building joint programme, World Bank-UNDP collaboration on the Millennium Development Goals in conflict-affected environments, post-conflict needs assessments, transitional results matrices and multi-donor trust funds.	Ongoing	BCPR; BDP; BRSP; UNDGO; UNDP country offices
5.3 Increase coordination with DPA on country strategies through increased formal and informal consultations and through continuation of cooperation through the Joint	Ongoing	Regional bureaux; BCPR

Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention.		
5.4 Outreach to regional development banks developing crisis prevention and recovery and fragile states strategies through OECD-DAC and through initiation of bilateral dialogues. Dialogue with the Africa Development Bank (ADB) already planned.	Dialogue with ADB initiated 1st quarter 2007	Regional bureaux; BCPR; BRSP
5.5 Continue engagement with civil society through small - grants program and through existing UNDP-civil society forums.	2007-2011	CSO division; Oslo Governance Center; UNDP country offices; regional bureaux
Evaluation issue and recommendation 6 **The Executive Board should request a report on the implementation of the recommendations for its 2007 annual session.** The Executive Board should monitor the implementation of the recommendations and should commission a further evaluation at a convenient mid-point between 2006 and 2015.		
Management response UNDP is negotiating a reporting framework based on its new strategic plan. UNDP work in crisis-affected countries will be reported on as part of this broader framework, and UNDP management would recommend that this be used as a basis for monitoring UNDP impact in crisis-affected environments.		
Key management actions	**Time frame**	**Responsible unit**
6.1 Report on implementation of recommendations within the context of reporting on the strategic plan.	2007	Operations Support Group; Evaluation Office; BCPR